India - In - - Transition

BY

Dr. T. S. S. RAJAN

AUM

INDIA IN TRANSITION

(AN EXHORTATION)

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WITH A PREFACE BY

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PREFACE

AT the conclusion of one of the most famous historical novels of the nineteenth century *The Cloister and the Hearth*—Charles Reade makes the following beautiful and pregnant observation: "The words of a genius so high as his are not born to die; their immediate work upon mankind fulfilled, they may seem to lie torpid; but at each fresh shower of intelligence Time pours upon their students, they prove their immortal race, they revive, they spring from the dust of great libraries; they bud, they flower, they fruit, they seed, from generation to generation, from age to age." These wise words are eminently applicable to the speeches and writings of Swami Vivekananda. He put new life into the dry bones of social, emotional, and intellectual activity in India; and wherever the magic of his influence was felt a new vigour was born in the mind and a new rapture enkindled in the soul.

PREFACE

Every page of this book bears witness to the ardent love that the author bears for Swami Vivekananda, and his thorough appreciation of the Swamiji's teachings.

The author, Doctor T. S. S. Rajan, is a sincere and passionate patriot, and a true and ardent lover of our holy religion. He has travelled in the west and has studied the socio-political life developed there. His keen perception of the essential elements of our national genius, his enthusiasm, and the pure and fiery glow of his patriotic fervour arrest our attention, and this *brochure* by him is eminently worthy of careful perusal.

Modern sociology is a growing science, and the educated men of India, into whose hands are committed the great future of our beloved motherland, must beware of idolising, tentative, crude, and outworn generalisations put forth by some minds in the west. The great significance of "RACE" is being more and more widely recognised in the western countries now. Lord Beaconsfield says: "Race is everything; there

is no other truth. And every race must fall which carelessly suffers its blood to become mixed." Mr. H. S. Chamberlain says in his great book on "The foundations of the Nineteenth Centuary", "Nothing is convincing as the consciousness of the possession of Race. The man who belongs to a distinct, pure race, never loses the sense of it. The guardian angel of his lineage is ever at his side, supporting him where he loses his foothold, warning him like the Socratic Daemon when he is in danger of going astray, compelling obedience, and forcing him to undertakings, which, deeming them impossible, he would never have dared to attempt . . . . . Race lifts a man above himself." Unless we learn to recognise the absolute necessity of preserving the essential elements of our distinctive racial life, there is no doubt that the most beautiful product of human evolution, which has preserved its vitality and loveliness in spite of the devitalising power of time and the violent impact of adverse forces, will have passed into oblivion for ever.

PREFACE

Some wiseacres will smile knowingly and even ridicule us, when we talk about the Hindu Race. They will say with Dr. Shiraton that "India is a geographical than a historical name". They will point triumphantly to the highly imaginative and mutually irreconcilable theories about the discordant human groups that have settled in India. Let us leave these wisemen in their wisdom. We know that for ages the Hindu race has been here and has had an organic and progressive life. It is not possible in this preface to expose the hollowness of the pretentious theories above said. Whatever might have been the original composition of the Hindu race, the race has been a settled fact for at least many thousands of years, and we may hence leave the antiquarians—the Pickwicks of Indian anthropology—to burrow in the fields of an imaginary past, as our business is to

> "Act, act in the living present
> Heart within, God overhead".

Hence the paramount duty of every Hindu is to preserve this organic unity of the race, to guard the treasure of his heritage, and to

maintain his place in the sun as one who has a distinct mission in the universe. For achieving this end, two distinct lines of effort are required—a watchful guarding of our inner life, and a careful regulation of our outer life. What are the great traits of the spirit of the Hindu race? They are the spirit of inwardness, the power of realising divine immanence, the love of the spiritual aspects of beauty, the passion for peace, the longing for divine communion, the luminous self-poised rapture of contemplation and meditation, an orderly social evolution, emotional refinement, and a spirit of unbounded toleration and self-sacrifice. This priceless treasure of the spirit has to be guarded by a systematic training of the inner life of each individual, as laid down in our holy books, and by the preservation of the essential elements and traditions and customs in regard to our outer life.

Some of the persons who have styled themselves 'reformers' and 'progressivists'—we are reformers and progressivists ourselves and resent their vainglorious attempt

to monopolise those descriptions—say that the western civilisation is higher in every respect than our civilisation, and that to transplant the genius of the western civilisation here, we must discard our forms of life and the spirit of our ideals. They do not know that no such transplantation is possible. Even if it is, how do they say that that civilisation is higher? Mr. Chamberlain whom I have quoted above well says: "Civilisation is in itself nothing, for it denotes something merely relative; a higher civilisation could be regarded as a positive gain (*i.e.* an 'advance') only when it led to an increasingly intensive intellectual and artistic shaping of life and to an inner moral enlightenment".

Again, some educated Indians who are more in evidence than their betters, shout others down by their clamorous and grandiose talk about "patriotism". They say that the demands of patriotism require us to abolish caste, to denationalise ourselves, and to become slavish imitators of the west. They evidently have a special doorway into

the innermost shrine of the goddess of patriotism, which we, less blessed mortals must not enter. The caste system in its proper form—not in its present debased form—is quite consistent with nationality. Sister Nivedita says in her valuable book on *Civic and National Ideals*: "These miracles of human unification are the work of PLACE. . . . . Any country geographically distinct has the power to become the cradle of a Nationality. National unity is dependent upon place. The rank of a nation in humanity is determined by the complexity and potentiality of its component parts. What any one of its elements has achieved in the past, the Nation may expect to attain, as a whole, in the future. Complexity of elements, when duly subordinated to the nationalising influence of PLACE is a source of *Strength* and not *Weakness* to a nation." The undebased caste system co-xisted in India with a great civilisation and a high state of national life in India, and this in itself is the best refutation of the pet theories of the "patriots" above referred to.

Dr. Rajan has very well brought out the great privileges and duties of the Hindu race in his little book. He points out, wherein lies the distinctive greatness of the Hindu genius. No race can outlive its term of usefulness to humanity. An effete race must die just like a senile individual. Hence constant rejuvenation by keeping away contaminating influences, by regulating our social economy, by doing purposive work, and above all by going with reverent feet on an inner pilgrimage to the temple of Truth and Love, in the holy city of the heart, is required, if we should maintain the continued vitality of our race and enable India to preserve her rightful place in the universe.

What is *our* programme of work for the uplift of Mother India? Dr. Rajan eloquently says "It is a change of the soul itself for the better that will cure the evils of life. No amount of force or Government or legislative cruelty will change the conditions of a race, but it is *spiritual culture* and *ethical culture* alone that can change wrong social tendencies for the better." Thus we must

foster social love and spiritual effort. We must develop, modernise, and vitalise the vernaculars, for the life of each race is so bound up with its language that if you neglect the latter, the former dies. We must develop a national art as Dr. Coomaraswami has preached to us with his passionate eloquence. We must attend to our scientific and industrial development without slavishly following the mistakes of the west. Sir Theodore Morison says in '*The Economic Transition in India*': "We can only hope that India may be warned in time by the example of Europe, and that the industrial revolution may not be disfigured by the reckless waste of human life and human happiness which has stained the annals of European industry. Most of all must we wish she may not lose the lofty idealism by which she has hitherto been so nobly distinguished," We must give a national education to our boys and girls. We must, above all, realise our greatness and our place in the universe, and while progressing in the fields of material progress and

general enlightenment under our human and enlightened British Government, we must keep our gaze fixed upon the polestar of spiritual rapture.

Dr. Rajan's book is throughout controversial, and one may not agree with all that he says. But his love of our land and the keenness of his inner vision are obvious in every line of his book. Let us deeply think over what he has written and work with all our might for the regeneration of our land. I cannot conclude this preface better than by quoting the following stirring lines from Vivekananda's poem "To the Awakened India",

"Then speak, O Love !—
Before thy gentle voice serene, behold how
Visions melt, and fold after fold of dreams
Departs to void, till Truth and Truth alone,
In all its glory shines,—
And tell the world—
Awake, arise, dream no more!
. . . . . Be bold and face
The truth! Be one with it! Let visions cease
Or if you cannot, dream then truer dreams,
Which are Eternal Love and Service Free".

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THE panorama of the struggling marchers, along the avenue of time, is indeed a glorious sight. Caught in the never-ending wheel of *samsâra*, they thus pass on—some stumbling, some weak, some miserable, some happy, some temporarily dropping out of the scene only to reappear again, yet some more with bold intrepid steps, while yet, only a rare few, calm, quiet, and serene, lead the willing rest on to the goal. Men come; men go; nations rise; nations fall; many empires are built and as many are dismantled and crumbled to dust. Yet stern nature controls the destiny of MAN with a grim grip and impedes his onward way, when,

a mighty soul comes down to rule the tyrant nature and make her his abject servant. Such giants have now and again appeared and have held the beacon-light for the benefit of humanity and borne testimony to the words of the Lord :—

'For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked, and for the establishment of Dharma I come into being in every age'.

These men are the *avathâra purushâs,* and in them and through them, God manifests Himself. The number of such *avathâras* is legion. Some few are known; many are unknown. A handful come into the limelight of the world as great preachers, thinkers and writers, but many sink in silence. With some, the name and the noise are drowned after them, but with a precious few, their footprints become eternal. With one or two, their glory sheds an ever-growinglustre as centuries roll on and the gigantic growth of their influence ceases only with the great Pralaya. But such God-men appear only in critical periods of a nation's life, and where the nation has lived the

longest, amidst them, the record of these *avathâras* is the biggest.

Far, far into the gloom of the past, where even the hoary traditions dare not penetrate, where no recorded history can ever hope to lay its dissecting hands, and where no speculation ever dare to show its bold head, there, the vedantic Hindu stood as the father of all nations. The ancient Egyptians live in the mummies and mounds. Old Babylonia has been entombed in the bowels of the earth. Carthage is a monumental ruin. The luxury of Rome, the Spartan physique, are all mere historical records. But India lives—lives in spite of countless invasions, ages of oppression and tyranny, and endless strife amongst her weak children. What is it that makes her live defying time? Whence comes this wonderful vitality of the race? The ebb and flow of national tide seems never ending and goes on in a regular wave from age to age. Beginning from the time of those countless seers of thoughts—the *Rishies* of yore—the great *Manthra-drishtas*—down to the

degrading days of our own dark ages. India was not lacking in producing those giant souls, who have kindled ablaze the smouldering fire of our nation. They came, not incubated by mahatmic hands, but by themselves in answer to the call of the hour. Long before, when the scions of noble Rishies got degenerated by drinking the soma juice and got fat by the produce of sacrificial fire, there came on the scene the little Shepherd Boy of Brindavan—with the flute of the wonderful Gita. He sang the 'Song Celestial' for the uplift of humanity and raised the warring Kshatriyas into power. The priest, with the warrior to help him, again reverted to old ways. Consequently, the society began to degenerate again ; the abuse of sacrifices was revived with the authority of the sword, and the persecution of the masses was the result. Then again Gautama Sakya Muni arose with a heart as wide as the boundless ocean, and with the infinite love and mercy to one and all, preached his universal doctrine of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. He struck a

merciless blow at organised priestcraft and its myriad forms of sacrifices. The golden age of India according to modern western historians followed this great religious upheavel. But as it should be, the tide went down. Rank superstition, meaningless idolatry again became rampant, and Indian society trembled under the infernal dance of various races of barbarians, who were admitted into the Buddhistic fold by virtue of its all-embracing spirit of equality, and at this time, the Divine Messenger was young Sankara. With him rose up the wave of our fortune, only to come down, and to be taken up again in turn by Sri Ramanuja, Madhwa, Chaitanya, Ramdass, Dayanand, Ramakrishna and Vivekananda.

Amidst all this ups and downs, the foundations of the race remained unshaken, although the towers and turrets that proudly grew up, have more than once tumbled down by the apathy and neglect of its children. As many times as it has come down, so many have been the master-builders that have come up to rebuild a wonderful structure on

those old, solid, time-honoured foundations. The last of the present series is the SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

Verily he is the product of modern India. From his very youth, he was subject to the same bracing or degrading conditions, amidst which, many of us have grown up to day. Our difficulties have been his. He was educated on modern lines. He had all the benefits and evils of a thorough western training. Distressing poverty on one side, an university career on the other, and behind both these, an unceasing spiritual restlessness; these were some of the main features of his younger days. The transitional period of our land has had a telling effect on his career. Whether we like it or not, the West has been forcing itself on us, with hard and fast facts, collected by the application of tangible powers. The modern science is dazzling the eyes of many of us and is causing a great stir. The glamour of western civilization with the plenitude of fortune, gigantic physical power and intense sense-enjoyments, is blinding the expectant vision

of Young India. The West is growing in her strange luxuries in the form of costly drinks, splendid apparel, wonderful conveyances, various fashions of dress, new manners and customs. While Old India in spite of her apparent weakness, has not left her iron grip on her sons. The graphic picture of the situation has been very elegantly described by Vivekananda.

'In India are the hopeful and strengthening traditions of her ancient forefathers, in the days when she was at the zenith of her glory—traditions, that have been brought out of the pages of her history by the great sages of her own land and outside, that run for numberless years and centuries through her every vein, with the quickening of life drawn from Universal Love—traditions, that reveal unsurpassed valour, superhuman genius, and supreme spirituality, which are the envy of the Gods—these inspire her with future hopes. On one side there appear, with stern presence, Sita, Savitri, austere religious vows, fastings, the sage's recluse, the orange garb of the semi-naked, homeless sannyasin, samadhi, and the search after the self. On the other side, is the independence of western societies based on self-interest, while the other is the extreme self-sacrifice of Aryan society.'

In this violent conflict, is it strange that our society should be tossed up and down? Manifold problems are facing us and it is

for us to choose. The great goal of the West is *individual independence.* The language employed to reach the end is *money-making education,* and the method is *politics.* But the goal of India is Mukti, the language—the Vedas, and the means—Renunciation. The West is trying to solve the problem of, how much a man can have, while we are striving to find out, how little one can have. We are both of us working at opposite poles, and when these two civilizations meet together, the give-and-take must be enormous, but we ought to be mindful of our foundations before we begin to assimilate foreign Ideals. On one side the New India says:—

'We should have full freedom in the selection of husband and wife: because in the marriage, in which are involved the happiness and misery of all our future life, we must have the right to determine according to our free will.'

On the other hand, Old India is dictating:—

'Marriage is not for sense-enjoyment, but to perpetuate the race.' This is the Indian conception of marriage. By the producing of children you are contributing to, and are responsible for the future good or evil of the society. Hence the society has the right

to dictate whom you shall marry and whom you shall not. That form of marriage obtains in society, which is conducive most to its well-being. Will you give up your desire of any individual pleasure for the good of them?

On one side New India is saying:—

'If we only adopt western ideas, western language, western food, western dress and western manners, we shall be as strong and as powerful as the western nations.'

On the other, Old India is saying:—

'Fools! By imitation, other's ideas never become one's own—nothing unless earned, is your own. Does the ass in the lion's skin become the lion?'

On the one side New India is saying:—

'What the western nations do, is surely good otherwise how did they become so great?'

On the other side, Old India is saying:—

'The flash of lightning is intensely bright, but only for a moment. Look out, boys, it is dazzling your eyes. Beware!'

In this tug-of-war, we, the sons of modern India, have to find out a way which would, while retaining all that was sound and useful in the old, give us the best in others. Our society is not perfect, nor is it entirely spotless. We have to learn many new things and must always struggle for higher things. But one thing we should always

be careful about. The aggressive West may, for the time, be strong, and a vulgar imitation by the weaker race, may in the end smother and kill the latter. Whatever we do, whatever customs and habits we adopt and incorporate into our society, must be such as would not, in the least, undermine the foundations of our national life. Already many of our young men are drifting to be a sort of intellectual Eurasians, and woe to India if the number of such proud weaklings is allowed to grow unchecked. In spite of adverse circumstances of various sorts, our Mother-land is still a glowing example of eternal subjection to the mandates of society.

Vivekananda sums up our virtues and corresponding vices in a nut-shell.

'The good point' he says 'is that men can do one or two things well, with very little effort, having practiced them every day through generations. The delicious rice and curry, which a cook of this country prepares with the aid of three lumps of earth and a few sticks, can be had nowhereelse. With the simple mechanism of an antedeluvian loom worth one rupee and the feet put in a pit, it is possible to make kincobs worth twenty rupees a yard, in this country

alone. A torn mat, an earthern lamp and that, fed by castor oil, with the aid of materials such as these, wonderful savants are produced in this country alone. An all-forbearing attachment to an ugly and deformed wife, and a life-long devotion to a worthless and villanious husband, are possible in this country alone. But all these things are done by people guided like life-less machines;—there is no mental activity, no unfoldment of the heart, no vibration of life, no flux of hope, no strong stimulation of the will, no experience of keen pleasure, nor the contact of intense sorrow; there is no stir of inventive genius, no desire for novelty, no appreciation of the new things.'

There is not the least doubt that we should get out of the groove of old stereotyped and lifeless methods and no virtue can ever accrue by following the beaten track of custom.

If it is a virtue to adhere strictly to rules and customs handed down from generation to generation then say, as Swamiji so humorously puts it:—

'Who is more virtuous than a tree, who is a greater devotee, a holier saint than a railway train? Who has ever seen a piece of stone transgress the natural law? Who has ever known cattle to commit sin?'

Expansion is the only sign of life and growth. When all progress stops, and where the children of the soil are hopelessly

divided, the outlook is very grave indeed. Even the New India has not produced a homogenuity of thought amongst its members. There is the man, who after attending a course of dry sickly lectures in a college, thinks he has drunk the cup of western wisdom to the full and swaggers he knows everything. He laughs at the ancient sages. To him all Hindu thought is trash, nonsense, religious superstition. Again there is the other who has had the benefits of western education, but runs to the other extreme like a monomaniac and tries to egg out a grand philosophy in every old women's omen. He is a bundle of scientific superstitions. Where common sense is wanting to explain his pet superstitions, he brings in the aid of his western sciences. To sit west or east, to let fly the edge of one's clothing or to leave a tuft of straggling hairs pointing to the skies—these find a ready explanation in his demented mental state. Every village superstition is a mandate of the Vedas to him and according to him, the carrying of these mandates constitutes national life.

But what about the so-called Vaidiks? Their philosophy is the kitchen, and their logic is 'don't touchism.' The eternal Shrutis have been twisted, contorted, and annotated upon on behalf of 'Don't touch me, I am holy; Don't look at my food and pollute it.' Into what further depths of degradation would a noble philosophy be plunged? Yet this silly discussion on hair-splitting differences is still going on at the sacrifice of life-giving principles contained in the Vedas. No wonder we have an orthodoxy without a backbone—the lot of them a curious combination of a profound intellect and ignorant superstition—a bundle of lifeless forms and discussing the merits of the rainbow colours of a caste mark on the forehead. They conveniently forge shastras to suit them on all occasions. If shastras fail them, then, they take refuge in *âcharam*. This word is a safe talisman for all their vices. Referring to this constant talk of Varnâshrama Dharma, Swamiji says:—

'Where are the Varnas to-day? Where are our Kshatryas and Vaisyas? They are not apparent

anywhere except when some unknown sectarian community suddenly take it into their head to graft themselves into higher castes. But if there are the Vaisyas and Kshatryas, why not you give them all the Yajnopavits and teach them the vedas? Where there are no Kshatryas and Vaisyas but only Brahmins and Sudras, then the Shastras enjoin the Brahmins not to live in that country. So according to that law all Brahmins must depart bag and baggage. How many of us are prepared to do that? Yet we want others to respect our Shastras.'

Referring to the confusion of castes and its meaningless ceremonies, the Swamiji summarizes the whole theme on these true but cutting terms :—

'What shall I say of India? Let alone the Sudra class—her Bramins, to whom belonged the acquisition of scriptural knowledge, are now the foreign professors, her Kshatryas—the ruling Englishman, and Vaisyas too—the English, in whose bone and marrow is the instinct of English trade; so that, only the sudra-ness, the-beast-of-burthenness is now left with the Indians themselves. A cloud of impenetrable darkness has at present equally enveloped us all. Nor is there firmness of purpose, nor boldness of enterprise, neither courage of heart, nor strength of mind, neither aversion to maltreatment by others, nor dislike for slavery, neither love in the heart, nor hope of manliness; but what we have in India are only deep-rooted envy and

strong antipathy against one another, morbid desire to run by hook or crook the weak and doglike to lick the feet of the strong. Now the highest satisfaction consists in the display of wealth and power, devotion in self-gratification, wisdom in the accumulation of transitory objects; yoga in hideous diabolical practices, work in the slavery of others; civilization in base imitation of foreign nations, eloquence in the use of abusive language, the merit of literature in extravagant flatteries of the rich or in diffusion of ghastly obscenities! What to speak separately of the distinct sudra class of such a land, where the whole population has virtually come down to the level of the Sudra.'!

Apart from these, Modern India has produced a band of social reformers. These men have been in evidence for the past half a century. But the record of their progress is nothing, in proportion to the noise they have been creating from their platform all these days. The badge of their faith is denunciation—denunciation of the Hindu race and its civilization. To them, the word *Religion* is like a red rag to a bull. Everything European must be good, and must forthwith be imitated. English women move freely in society, therefore we must also drag our women out shamelessly.

These people talk of breaking the superstition of caste and mean that all people in a city should sit down to a dinner of beefsteak and champagne, as if all our national problems consist in interdining alone. Then we must marry freely and marry our widows. By mentioning this, I do not want to pose myself as an orthodox man. I am for reform, but constructive reform on national lines. No amount of base imitation will be of any use. What we want is a better quality and not form. The ancients had plenty of caste-breakers, but they did not work on the lines of modern reformers. Personally I have no fault to find with these reformers. Many of them are good, pure and honest men, and their ideas are very laudable on certain points; but they fail to recognize our historically acquired character as a people. To take an instance of the result of their work, I shall quote the last census. In the whole of Madras Presidency, infant marriages have not decreased in any way during the last decade. The slight diminuition in the southern districts

is amply made up for by proportionate increase in the northern circars. Referring to the ancient reformers, Vivekananda says:—

'That those men did not mean that all fools and lunatics in the country should marry, when, where and whom they chose, and reduce the country to a lunatic asylum, nor did they believe that the prosperity of a nation is to be gauged by the number of husbands its widows get. I have yet to see such a prosperous nation.'

Even the so-called educated classes do not show much tendency for reform. They are verbal reformers and each one wants to reform all the others except himself. They are actually afraid of the orthodoxy, perhaps even more than the orthodox man is afraid of the english-educated man. Thus one pulls the other down and *vice versa*. What reform can you expect from a society mostly constituted of these two elements, leaving alone the ignorant masses?

They are not affected by these surface ebullitions. They have inherited a philosophic character in spite of their utter ignorance in matters secular. They are poor but

often contented men. 'Of all countries on earth,' says the Swami 'it is in India that poverty is not considered a crime; whereas the working man in the west is a devil when compared to him. In spite of his good nature we have neglected him for the past so many centuries and it is why we have become an easy prey to any and every adventurer that dared to put his foot in our soil.'

It is the thorough and merciless abuse of the principles of our Religion that has made us slaves for the past one thousand years. Our national ideals have always been high and in our incapacity to keep up to our ideal, we have fallen. The meaningless veneration for cows has cost us our kingdom. It is said that when Mahomed Ghori invaded India, on the first two occasions he was repulsed and driven out. But the third time he fenced his armies with a row of cows and no Hindu soldier would fire a single shot, and the battle was lost. Even the recent instance of a stupid Rajah of Tanjore is worth mentioning, at least to show, to what

lengths of degeneration could stupid ideas of Religion drive an otherwise sane man. When the enemies surrounded the fort of the Tulajaji Rajah of Tanjore, he ordered that the gates be thrown open and the way filled with sacred Tulsi. Said the valiant King :—

'Oh, if those mlechas dare trample on my holy Tulsi, let them take my kingdom.'

No wonder he was dethroned and his race got extinct with his blessed Tulsi. This is our idea of Religion. What will poor Religion do under these circumstances? Who is to blame—the man or the Religion? If we follow up carefully separating the non-essentials from the essentials we shall be able to arrive at the right conclusion. Set to work in the right direction and work from the bottom. We shall all attain Godhood. We all lack faith in ourselves and that is the cause of our evils. We have developed the *Tamas* in our nation at the expense of the other two qualities, and not only that, but have hypnotized ourselves into the belief that we are *Satvic* in our nature. It is just like a beggar boasting of renunciation when

he has nothing to renounce. What glory is there in the celibacy of an impotent man? What wisdom is there in the silence of a fool? Vivekananda once met a man in his native place whom he had known before as a very stupid dull person, who knew nothing and had not the desire to know and was living the life of a brute. He asked him what he should do to know God, how was he to get free. 'Can you tell a lie' asked the Swami. 'No' he replied. 'Then you must learn to do so. It is better to tell a lie than to be a brute or a log of wood; you are inactive, you have not certainly reached the highest state which is beyond all actions calm and serene; you are too dull even to do something wicked.' Commenting on this incident, he says, that a man must be active in order to pass through activity to perfect calmness. A *Tamasic* nature cannot suddenly be transfered into *Satvic*. It must become *Rajasic* before it can reach the highest stage. Inactivity must be avoided by all means. Activity always means resistance—resisting of all evils,

mental, moral and physical. When we have resisted these succesfully, calmness will come.

I have now vaguely outlined to you the actual condition of our society as it exists to-day. It is to all appearance dismal indeed, and is painted still more dismally by carping critics. Any sane thinker may well ask in doubt, is there any deliverance for us from the quagmire we have drifted into? Is there any foundation on which our national edifice could be built? Have we got that life power still smouldering in us which can be lit up with some effort? Have we got a common central idea to work upon? On a positive answer to these questions rests all our progress and life as a nation. Well, let us look back on our history and see whether we have reacted to outside influences. Whenever we came in contact with foreigners, there we have exhibited a tremendous power of spirituality and have conquered the conquerors. Alexander the Great was so much fascinated with the spiritual power exhibited by our

Yogis that he wanted to take one *sadhu* along with him to Greece, in addition to the number of learned men whom he was taking from India. The *sadhu* declined to come and Alexander grew angry and drew out his sword and threatened to kill him. The sadhu laughed heartily at this and said in reply, much to the amazement of the infuriated emperor "Sire, you have been credited with a good intellect. But never in your life have you exhibited yourself as a greater fool than you appear now. I challenge you to kill me. You can cut this body down but what of that? Frail thing! Can you or even a thousand like you, kill the 'I' within?" The proud Greek buckled up his sword and left the sage in reverence. This is but a sample of the vitality of our race in those times. We were the pioneers of missionary activity in this world. Did we not spread Buddhism far, far beyond the precincts of India? What splendid national power developed after the spread of Buddhism. As every rising wave is followed by a falling one, and

as day is followed by night, so did our greatness in this world sink. The birth of Sankara and the rise of the Rajput power were the next tide of our national reaction. Again during the Mahomedan period, in spite of aggression and religious tyranny of a most hideous type, our nation produced a Kabir, a Sivaji, and a Guru Govind Singh. Even the fanatical Islam imbibed our Vedanta, and Sufism is but Vedanta behind the Koran. Even in modern times, Hinduism has shown signs of reaction in the rise of many new institutions, two of which deserve special mention—the glorious Arya Samaj in the north-west and the Unitarian Brahmo Samaj in the north-east. Still further, the advent of Sri Ramakrishna, singing the song of purity and toleration, shed upon the world the true light of Vedanta. Since his time, Hinduism has become aggressive and has permeated the western minds. As an effect thereof, we could see living western scholars studying the eternal principles of Vedanta. Poets, philosophers, and savants of this class, are

many—including in their category men like Kant, Emerson, Carlyle, Max Muller, Schopenhauer, Paul Deussan and Tennyson. It is impossible to go into the details of their lives and the influence of Vedantic ideals in their writtings, but I shall be content to quote but a few stray stanzas from Tennyson's 'Higher Pantheism'.

The sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, hills and the plains,
Are not these, Oh Soul, the vision of him, who reigns?
Is not the vision He? Though he be not that which he seems.
Dreams are true while they last and do not we live in dreams?

Again in his " Ancient Sage ",

'If thou wouldst hear the nameless and wilt dive
Into the temple-cave of thine own Self,
There, brooding by the central altar, thou
Mayst haply learn the Nameless has a voice
By which thou wilt abide, if thou be wise,
And if thou knowest, though canst not know;
For knowledge is the swallow on the lake
That sees and stirs the surface there-shadow there,
But never yet hath dipt into the abysm,
The abysm of all abysms, beneath, within.
The blue of the sky and sea, the green of earth,
And in the million millionth of a grain
Which cleft and cleft again for ever more
And ever vanishing never vanishes,

To me, my son, more mystic than myself
Or even the Nameless is to me.
And when thou seest thy free soul through heaven,
Nor understandest bound nor boundlessness
Thou seest the Nameless of hundred names
And if the nameless should withdraw from all
Thy frailty counts most real, and all thy world
Might vanish like thy shadow in the dark.'

Rev. C. F. Andrews says " That as we read this and other passages in modern poetry, we feel as though we were back in the Upanishads, repeating Indian thoughts uttered centuries ago and there is, can be, little doubt that India is in a great measure, however indirectly, the source of their inspiration ".

From this it will be plain, that in spite of all abuses and denunciation, we have kept alive our national conciousness. We have done well so far, but we ought to do better. Now let us see what are the essential things required for the proper development of our race. Platform patriots speak of patriotism as if it were a cheap commodity. But how many of us are here that could feel—not feel merely but feel from the bottom of our heart ? In the sincere outburst of his

unbounded patriotism, Vivekananda asks 'Do you feel? Do you feel that millions and millions of the descendants of Gods and sages, have become next door neighbours to brutes? Do you feel that millions are starving to-day and millions have been starving for ages? Do you feel that ignorance has come over the land like a dark cloud? Does it make you restless and sleepless? Has it gone into your blood and made you almost mad? Are you seized with the one idea of the misery of ruin and have you forgotton all about your name, fame, your wives and children, and even your own bodies?'

The first necessity for all great achievements is the *depth of feeling*.

Secondly, a *strong will*, which would overcome mountain-high obstructions. Even if the whole world stands against us, we must do what we honestly feel to be right, and a certain steadiness of purpose, a steadfastness to one's own ideal at all costs. As Bharthrahari says.—'Let sages blame or let them praise; let the goddess of fortune come or let her go where she likes; let death come

to-day or let it come in hundreds of years; he indeed is the steady man who does not move one inch from the way of truth'.

Lastly, we must have *Vairagyam,* giving up of small things, even bodily comforts, for the sake of helping others. In India, we find many ascetics, who give up the world to gain their salvation. That is the remnant of the old cult. But I will say to these men who have taken the vow of renunciation 'Make your vow complete and absolute. Give up even your salvation for the sake of helping others'. This is the pinnacle of the glory of sannyasi. "Give up this little life of yours" says Swami Vivekananda "What matters it if you die of starvation, you and I and thousands like us, so long as this nation lives? The nation is sinking, the curse of unnumbered millions is on our own heads. Those to whom we have been giving ditch water to drink when they have been dying of thirst, and all the while the perennial river of water was flowing past; the unnumbered millions whom we have allowed to starve in sight of plenty; the unnumbered

millions to whom we have talked of Advaita and whom we have hated with all our strength; the unnumbered millions for whom we have invented the doctrine of *lokachara;* to whom we have talked theoretically that we are all the same, and all are one with the same Lord, without even an ounce of practice. Wipe off this blot—Arise and Awake."

These being the principles of practice, 'what is the pivot on which these principles should revolve? What has been and is our permanent feature as a nation which feature has not yet been destroyed in spite of countless evil tendencies and antagonistic influences? What is the undying spark of fire that has been kept alive? It is our *spirituality*; it is our *Upanishads.* It is the *fearlessness* of the Vedânta in all its phases. It is on *this*, our national edifice must be constructed. Any amount of social or political manipulation of human conditions, will not raise a society which is weak and lacking in character. It is a change of the soul itself for the better that will cure the

evils of life. No amount of force or government, or legislative cruelty will change the conditions of a race, but it is *spiritual culture* and *ethical culture* alone that can change wrong racial tendencies for the better. Very often the word Religion, Advaita and Vedânta, frighten many of us. But unfortunately for us there is no other word that is abused more in India than that poor word ‘Religion’. The politician is at it with all his vigorous statistics. The socialist is at it again with his denunciation. But not one in a thousand understands what is really meant by *Religion*. Is it going to church or temples regularly? Is it the colored and uncolored caste marks over the body? Is it ‘don’t touch’ and ‘don’t see’? It is realising God, seeing God everywhere and in every man and woman. This is what our philosophy teaches and this is what our sages have realised. The word ‘philosophy’ again is a much abused word in modern India. But what is philosophy? Has it any sense or purpose? Well, to mention briefly, the foundations of philosophy are these :—

Firstly, it must be co-ordinate with the ultimate results of science and from these, must form the widest generalisations possible. According to Herbert Spencer, this is called Phenomenology.

Secondly, it must investigate the realm of knowledge and trace its source. This is Epistomology of Kant, Hegel and Fichte.

Thirdly, it must lead our minds into the realm of the Absolute, of the Unknown, and then solve the problems of Life and Death. It explains the origin of the Universe and of individual existence and the purpose of evolution. It should help us in becoming free from all limitations of ignorance and selfishness.

These in the main are the functions of Philosophy and the sublime truths of the Vedânta answer these tests in the most perfect manner. Therefore it is on the strength of these truths that our progress must depend. But we must also take note of the surrounding circumstances. We cannot afford to ignore the practical considerations of daily life and whatever we do,

it must be in conformity with the times. Expansion is life and isolation is death. We have suffered enough and more by our insular ideas. It is time to call for a halt and see whither we are going. First of all let us see what we can learn from others and how much of that foreign influence we can assimilate and incorporate into our national life. Desisting for a moment from looking into the glories of the past, we must look around us and take what we want from the west. Yes, we do want something from the west and that is the spirit of *Rajas* (activity). We want that energy, which is at the bottom of all thirst for improvement. We want their love of independence, the spirit of complete self-reliance. We also need their indomitable fortitude, their unity of purpose and their dexterity in action. In short, we have to give up our *tamas* and try to pass on to the next stage. But remember that even *Rajas* is not our goal. The pure immortal *sattvic* state is our ideal. But how many of us could reach that state? How many of these *sattvic*

men could we count in India to-day? We have many pseudo-sattvics, who are but bundles of life-long laziness, whose diabolical tendencies are exhibited under the cloak of austerity. True sattvics are few, but is it just that millions should suffer from ignorance and poverty so that a rare few may attain salvation? First of all, learn to be great yourself. Great in the things of the world and then give up these things for a better, nobler and more glorious ideal. But in doing so, there is the danger that materialism may wipe away the precious jewels which we have stored up by ages of labour. Therefore to aviod this calamity, we must always keep the wealth of our own home before our eyes so that every one of us from the highest to the lowest, might know what our property is and at the same time keep the windows of our minds open to all available light from without. Remember that truth alone will survive and not falsehood. If our *acharams* are feeble and fragile as they are now-a-days in spite of all verbal protests to the contrary,

they will all disappear even as they are disappearing to-day. The Brahmin who will not bear the sight of a non-Brahmin during his mid-day dinner, drinks the alien manufactured soda-water and even the water drawn from public hydrants. He can use sugar purified with bone-ash without a moment's hesitation and why? Because these old grandmother ideas are not eternal truths and they are bound to disappear. Let us not pin our faith to these flimsy ideas, but take our stand on immortal truths contained in our Shruti.

I prefer to build our progress on the Upanishads rather than on anything else. The greatest evil we are suffering from to-day is the utter lack of faith in ourselves. To remove this defect, we want strength. As Swami says—'We will be much near *Gita* through football, and will be able to understand Vedânta better with our biceps a little stronger.' A healthy body shows a healthy mind and a good constitution is one of the essentials in acquiring *Rajas*. A hungry man is an angry man. What

philosophy can satisfy a starving man? It is like giving him stone when he cries for bread. Give him something to keep his body and soul together for some time and then he will be in a mood to listen and try to realise our philosophy. But mere physical strength is no good. The Negroes are a very strong race of people and so are the Kafirs and other similar tribes who are still at a low stage of evolution. Even in battles and wars, mere strength will not count much for success. In ancient India, Rama's nut-eating monkeys were more powerful than the Rakshasas. In modern times, the barely five feet puny Jap could bring down on his knees the mighty Russian Cossack. Along with physical strength, the mind must be strengthened. In the combination of these two alone, lies our salvation. Be bold, be strong, and be selfreliant. You can work wonders. First believe in yourselves. History tells us that only those men, who believed in themselves, became great and strong. A beautiful instance has been graphically depicited by Vivekananda

"Here to India, came an Englishman who was only a clerk and for want of funds and other reasons, he twice tried to blow his brains out, and when he failed, he believed in himself, he believed he is born to do great things, and that man became Lord Clive, the founder of the Empire. If he had believed the Padris and gone crawling all his life, 'Oh, Lord, I am weak and I am low'—where would he have been.? In a Lunatic asylum. You also are made lunatics with these evil teachings. I have seen all the world over the bad effects of these weak teachings of humanity that are destroying the human race. Our children are brought up in this way, and is it a wonder that they become semi-lunatics."

Therefore, the first step to gain this strength, is to uphold the Upanishads and believe 'I am the Soul; Me, the sword cannot cut, no weapons pierce; Me, the fire cannot burn; Me, the air cannot dry, I am the Omnipotent; I am the Omniscient.' Never say we are weak. We can do anything and everything; we only want faith in ourselves. The second great lesson we have to learn from Vedanta is the idea of Renunciation. Much depends upon the correct interpretation of the word. Very often people take Renunciation to mean yellow or orange colored robes, a shaven

head and a kamandalu. But unfortunately, these do not constitute renunciation. 'Renunciation' or 'giving up' is a thing of the heart and does not mean that every sane man should take to his heels and take refuge in caves and jungles praying on tiptoe night and day. A man may adopt all the externals of sanyasa but as long as there is the lurking idea of selfishness at his heart, he cannot lay claim to Renunciation. In plain language he is a HUMBUG. Whereas there may be a man living with his wife and children, doing the duty nearest to him according to his station in life, but all the while doing his work without attachment. He indeed is a real Yogi.

King Janaka represented this idea of sanyas by his exemplary life. Shiva, the Ideal Yogi, is always represented in our book, as sitting with his wife on his left and his two sons on either side, with the sacred bull in front and the *Bootha-ganas* round Him. This is our picture of Renunciation. The absolute non-attachment in the midst of the attachments of this world, constitutes

true Renunciation. Work, we must all work whole-heartedly, but let not work bind us down. Work is worship and to those who have realized the true principle of Vedànta, every living being is a God incarnate and his salvation consists in worshipping the millions of starving and suffering *Nârâyanas* round him. The material for such a worship is plenty in this land of ours and happy is the man who gets a chance of doing this wonderful puja. The Almighty himself has incarnated in these myriads of miserable men and women and everyone but the blind, can see that this opportunity of attaining Godhood has been so graciously given him. Therefore avail yourself of this chance. Leave not this worship and the salvation thereof in foreign hands. Realise they are all the One in Many, and put the shoulders to the wheel. It is to get this idea disseminated broadcast, that we have to bring the wonderful idea of *Adwaita* into practical life. It should no longer be kept a *Rahasya* as it has been done in the past. " Preach it aloud at

the top of your voice, heedless of caste, race or creed," says the Patriot-Saint in one of his addresses on the Mission of the Vedanta:

'When I was in America, I heard once the complaint made that I was preaching too much of Adwaita and too little of Dualism. Aye, I know what grandeur, what oceans of love, what infinite ecstatic blessings and joy there are in the dualistic love theories of worship and religion. I know it all. But this is not the time with us to weep, even in joy; we have had weeping enough; no more is this the time for us to become soft. This softness has been with us till we have become masses of cotton, and are dead. What our country now wants are muscles of iron and nerves of steel, gigantic wills which nothing can resist, which can penetrate into the mysteries and the secrets of the universe and will accomplish their purpose in any fashion, even if it meant going down to the bottom of the ocean and meeting death face to face. That is what we want and that can only be created, established and strengthened by understanding and realising the ideal of the adwaita, that ideal of one-ness of all.'

To attain this ideal is a great task no doubt, but there is no other alternative. We must all deluge the land with life-giving spiritual idea and *man-making* idea. Vyasa says:— 'In this Kaliyuga there is only one karma left. Sacrifices and tremendous tapasyas are of no avail now. Of

karma, one remains and that is the karma of giving. And of these gifts, the gift of spirituality and spiritual knowledge is the highest, the next gift is the gift of secular knowledge; the next is the gift of life; and the fourth is the gift of food.' Of the last there is more than enough. A man may travel from north to south with no other luggage than a bowl in his hand and be sumptuously treated all this distance. But enough of this. We must take up the *yuga dharma* in their order and give spiritual and then secular education to our boys. Let us not make any difference between man and man. Let there be no more fight between caste and caste and let all children of the soil drink deep at the fountain of knowledge. It is indeed a sorry spectacle that meets the eye of every thoughtful man. A poor pariah is not allowed to walk through the streets of a village, but the moment he becomes a *gnani* as he calls himself in the virtue of his being baptized in a new faith and changes his name into hodge-podge English, christian or mohomedan

name, it is alright. He can walk freely and even behave insolently. It looks nothing but idiotic on the face of it. Yet there it is. Such disgraceful nonsense should disappear from the land if ever a change for the better should come. The solution is not by bringing down the higher as it is often attempted by modern reformers, but by raising the lower up to the level of the higher. The Ideal of all in India should be to attain Brahmin-hood—Rishi-hood. We must all try to be Rishis—not by growing beards, wearing animals skins, and drinking soma juice and beget hundred children, but by becoming pure at heart, in word and in deed. This is *Rishihood:* Education does not consist in stuffing a certain amount of information into our brains and making it run riot there, undigested all through life-time. But on the contrary, it must be a life-building, man-making, character-forming education. It will be enough if we have five good, clear ideas and make them our life and character rather than carrying the whole library of the Universe in our heads.

When once we have made the foundation strong, then the superstructure will take care of itself. Our politics will have some meaning and strength, with men of character behind it. In his tour through India, Swami Vivekananda was often asked as to what his ideas are, about the women problem and widow marriage. He got disgusted with these often repeated questions and he once said :— 'Why do you ask me such questions? I am neither a woman nor a widow,' and I do think there is much sense behind these words. We, men cannot manage our concerns as it ought to be done and we are impertinent enough to arrogate to ourselves the duty of meddling in woman's affairs. Our women are quite capable of looking after their own concern and they have done so ably and beautifully in the past as women in no other nation have done. First educate them properly and see whether they do not solve their problems themselves. When once education gets to be wide-spread, then we must create the power from which the

law will spring ; legistive bodies must be formed. Democracy is the order of the day. The power of the people is lacking in India and that is what we should seek to build up by the right kind of education. The well being of the individual is our primary concern, because apart from the individual it is difficult to conceive of the nation. Therefore national progress is essentially associated with the individual welfare. Even the well-being of a single soul cannot be neglected in a national awakening. Self-love is the first teacher of Self-renunciation. But to stop there, is the worst thing we can do. Self-love is only the beginning and if we stop there we will be babies. Progress all round must be our watch-word and in that alone lies our salvation. Self-interest must grow into communal interest and from communal into national, and from national to universal. So begin at the last rung of the ladder of progress and ascend step by step. *Do not falter ; keep the goal clear in view, and we can never go wrong. Above all be true and have faith in yourselves.*

INDIA IN TRANSITION

The longest night seems to be passing away. The sleeper is awakening from his long sleep; the grey dawn in the east is already visible; the glorious orb of the sun will soon appear. The ancient Mother-land is now being stirred up with new thoughts and ideas; the wave of revival has already transformed Japan, and old China is fast getting out of the throes of civil war. New forces are at work everywhere. But what the outcome of all this will be, is very hard to predict accurately and I doubt, whether it will be possible to exactly outline the future of our land. Whether the popular ideas will be democratic or bureaucratic, whether the caste system will be revived as in the days of Manu or become still more crystalized as it is to-day, whether the sins of touching and seeing will be retained as in Madras or completely become uprooted as it is in the Punjab, whether the old sacrificial fire will cloud the bright blue sky or they be given up in favor of hideous forms of *tantric* worship, it will be indeed difficult to say, but whatever happens, the

fundamental principles of ethics underlying our national life must be uniform throughout. Let provincial modifictions be limited to the superstructure as will befit the diverse conditions of this vast continent. Let the true fundamental principles of the Eternal SANTHANA DHARMA be the basis of all our activities and in it lies our hope and our success. In fine, let us all be aware of the sense of duty we owe to this *oun own Motherland*. Our everything is here. Our hearth, our home, our Gods are all here. The Islam may fondly look forward for its inspiration to Constantinople, the Christians to the Sacred Jeruselam, and the Parsee to his long lost home. But to us, Hindus there is no place more holy, more sacred than this ancient *Punnyabhumi*. India will rise or fall just as we, her sons, rise or fall in the scale of nations. Remember that India has, in spite of her poverty, a splendid heritage, which the world is waiting to receive. That happy message of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss, Sat-Chit—Anand-should be given to all humanity by this ancient

Race of ours, which has, through good and bad fortune, through countless invasions and hundreds of revolutions, preserved this precious jewel of Vedanta, untarnished by foul hands. *So ye, sons of India! Join hands one and all in the sacred mission and blow the conch shell—the sound of which shall reverberate through all the civilized world and from pole to pole. Give up all false imitation, this dependence on others, this slavish weakness and arm yourself with that undying faith in Vedânta that knows no fear.*

OM-TAT-SAT